

COMPETENCY-MEASURED EDUCATION

PERFORMANCE PLUS

Tuning Up Utah's
Great Education
Engine



UTAH STATE
OFFICE OF



EDUCATION



DRAFT

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TUNING UP UTAH'S GREAT EDUCATION ENGINE

Utah State Board
of Education
Ad Hoc
Committee on
Graduation
Requirements
Approved
August 1, 2003

UTAH STATE
BOARD OF
EDUCATION
PROPOSAL

PERFORMANCE PLUS

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Introduction

Performance Plus

Utah's educational results are outstanding and the envy of many in the United States, especially as compared to the dollar spent per child for public education.

Our public, parents, educators, and state leaders can be pleased with the excellence in Utah's classrooms, as our schools are wonderful engines of industry and achievement.

As with any great engine, an occasional tune-up improves performance and provides greater efficiency in operation. The desire for all students to be better prepared led to the adoption of a November 1, 2002 Board motion on "increasing student competency." This action resonated well with Governor Michael O. Leavitt, who has long advocated for a system of competency-based education.

Subsequently, the 2003 Utah State Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, Senate Bill 154 directing the Board and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to:

- ▶ Focus on core academics.
- ▶ Increase graduation requirements.
- ▶ Ensure that high school seniors are progressing in challenging courses.

- ▶ Implement competency standards for progress and graduation.

The resulting proposal is entitled Performance Plus. This plan reflects a confluence of legislation from No Child Left Behind, SB 154, and U-PASS, as well as the experience and wisdom of successful educators and leaders throughout Utah.

The proposal will:

- ▶ "Raise the bar" so that all students will graduate with Core Curriculum competency.
- ▶ Focus on core academics and maintain a balanced curriculum.
- ▶ Require increased parental involvement, increased student commitment, significant additional funding for assessment and intervention, and increased public support to be successful.

A tune-up for Utah's marvelous education engine--that's **Performance Plus.**

PROPOSAL

for K-12 Education

■ IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PLAN DEPENDS UPON SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Interventions for students are essential. When standards of performance are increased and are consistent for all students, additional funds must be available to address the learning needs of individual students. Resources must be increased to provide for diagnostic assessment of student learning, and for counseling and critical interventions (e.g., tutoring, remedial classes, after-school programs, summer studies, or other supplemental services), without which some students will not be able to achieve essential levels of proficiency. Funds are also needed to enable the training of educators to deal with the divergent needs of students as identified through the regular examination of data.

■ ELEMENTARY STUDENTS MUST BECOME PROFICIENT IN KEY STANDARDS

By the end of third grade, students must be able to read proficiently and with understanding. By the end of the elementary school years, children must also have a solid understanding of math, a working knowledge of the principles of science, and have mastered basic writing skills. Students will be ex-

pected to demonstrate their abilities in standards of reading, writing, math, and science through ongoing performance assessment each year in elementary school. These assessments will be diagnostic in nature, giving teachers good information about individual student progress and helping them to tailor lessons to students' needs. Together with end-of-level (CRT) scores, a "gain score" will be figured each year so that students, parents, and teachers can see progress within each year and from year to year. Standards, diagnostic assessments, and gain scores will be implemented from kindergarten to high school in every Utah district.

■ MIDDLE LEVEL STUDENTS MUST EARN REQUIRED UNITS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

Students in 7th and 8th grades must earn a minimum of 12 units of general education, to include required units in:

Pre-Algebra

English 8

Integrated Science 8

In order to assist those who struggle with these expectations, intensive help will be needed. This may be a specialized placement in the district to include conditional placement at a high school where

choice of electives is narrowed to support learning needs, placement at an alternative learning environment, required summer studies, intensive tutoring, or other placements that ensure success in acquiring the vital skills of reading, writing, computation, problem-solving, and the principles of science.

■ HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MUST EARN REQUIRED UNITS OF GENERAL EDUCATION AS ONE MEASURE OF ABILITY

Students will complete the first of two requirements for a diploma by accumulating graduation units in 18 state-required courses and additional elective units, as prescribed by each district. Existing graduation requirements specify 15 state-required units in various subjects. The new requirement of 18 graduation units represents an increase of 3 units of focused electives over the existing specified graduation requirements, as well as an increase in the proficiency required. Required units of general education courses include:

- ▶ Language Arts, including English 9, 10, and 11 (3)
- ▶ Math, including Geometry or Applied Math II (2)
- ▶ Science, including Biology, Chemistry, or Physics (2)
- ▶ Social Studies, including Geography, U.S. History and U.S. Government (2.5)
- ▶ Health (1)

- ▶ Physical Fitness (1)
- ▶ Education Technology (.5)
- ▶ Applied Technology Education (1)
- ▶ Fine Arts (1.5)
- ▶ General Financial Literacy (.5)
- ▶ Academic choices in an area of focus, selected from above (3)

(Note: Institutions of higher education, including those with NCAA affiliation, may have additional entrance and high school course requirements. Students and their parents or guardians are responsible for becoming aware of, and meeting, those requirements.)

■ STUDENTS WILL PERFORM EXIT COMPETENCIES IN ADDITION TO EARNING UNITS OF GENERAL EDUCATION

The second requirement for a diploma will be a demonstration of exit competencies. The ability to write and speak well, to calculate and problem-solve, and to read and interpret charts, graphs, and tables will be some of the competencies expected of all Utah graduates. Competencies will be embedded in courses and may be demonstrated in a variety of classes taken in high school. Specific examples of competencies could include:

- ▶ Writing
Academic writing; technical writing
- ▶ Reading

Informational/enjoyment reading; technical reading

- ▶ Communication
Oral communication of ideas; interpersonal speaking
- ▶ Research
Inquiry and research; data representation using technology
- ▶ Technical Math
Probability and data analysis; shape, space, and measurement
- ▶ Academic Math
Discrete math; algebraic relationships
- ▶ Service
Academic, technical, or community service

Following careful dialog with parents and educators from throughout the state, specific competencies will be identified by the USBE and phased into the schools in a way that prepares students for success.

■ STUDENTS SHALL EARN COURSE UNITS THROUGH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. Earning a final course grade of C or better and passing (with a score of "sufficient" or better) the appropriate end-of-level test (CRT) within the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS) (where available).
2. Earning a final course grade of A and taking the CRT (where available).
3. Providing evidence of preparation in the subject area

and passing the CRT within U-PASS (where available) at the "substantial" level.

4. Where end-of-level CRTs do not exist, successfully passing a class of the appropriate content with a final grade of C or better, or demonstrating ability in the subject area according to requirements established by the USBE.

■ DISTRICTS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS WILL MAINTAIN AUTONOMY WITHIN REQUIREMENTS

Because local autonomy is precious and is reflected in local schedules and graduation requirements, districts and charter schools will offer at least six additional course opportunities above the 18 graduation units specified. However, if districts ask students to register for more than 24 units, then one-third of the additional units over 24 must be taken from one or more of the following subjects: Language Arts (including Foreign Language), Math, Science, and Social Studies, as determined and defined by the local school district or charter school.

■ ACCOMMODATIONS MAY BE MADE FOR SOME STUDENTS

According to state and federal law, accommodations related to required assessments associated with this plan may be made for students who qualify for accommodations under a plan associated with the Americans With

Disabilities Act (Section 504), for those students whose learning is based on goals from an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or for those students whose native language is not English and who have not yet acquired proficiency in English. Such accommodations shall be according to federal and state guidelines. In order to earn a basic diploma, a student must earn required units of general education as listed, and successfully perform exit competencies, with or without accommodations. Students not meeting those requirements will not receive a basic diploma, but will receive a certificate of completion.

■ CULTURAL, ARTISTIC, AESTHETIC, AND CHARACTER EDUCATION EXPERIENCES ARE VITAL

Daily lessons and student schedules in Utah should incorporate cultural, artistic, and aesthetic experiences and be embedded in the simultaneous teaching of sound decision-making, honesty, self-responsibility, teamwork, service, and citizenship. All school coursework will increase the emphasis on key standards of reading, writing, math, and science, and will encourage student engagement, attendance, creativity, and active participation.

■ HIGH ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS REQUIRE PARENT SUPPORT

Educators are committed to helping children succeed. However,

children will attain the highest level of achievement possible if parents assure that their children:

1. Live in a healthy, safe, and nurturing home.
2. Are monitored for school success.
3. Attend school regularly and on time.
4. Read every day.


Parents are always welcome to visit Utah schools and to take advantage of volunteer opportunities in the schools. Parents should regularly talk with students about their learning excitement and challenges.

■ PARENT-STUDENT-TEACHER MEETINGS ARE FUNDAMENTAL

Parent-student-teacher meetings are the key vehicles for planning a rigorous schedule and monitoring student achievement. In these meetings, students and their parents can customize schedules and experiences. In high school, electives can be focused on academic preparation for college, applied technology programs and preparation for employment, or emphasis in music, art, or other areas of personal student interest.

■ PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING PILOT PROGRAMS MAY BE SUBMITTED

Proposals will be accepted from school districts and charter schools to pilot new ways of funding schools based on competency as well as



class time. Proposals will be considered and funded as allocations permit.

■ **ARTICULATION WITH
HIGHER EDUCATION WILL
INCREASE THE VALUE OF A
COMPETENCY-BASED
EDUCATION**

The productivity of the state's investment in public education would be increased if curriculum standards, objectives, and exit competencies were articulated with the state's institutions of higher education. Such articulation would provide incentive to students to continue study within those curricular areas while in high school, and simultaneously develop a meaningful transcript of higher education credits. This would enable students to matriculate into the higher education system with substantial numbers of prerequisite or general education courses already completed.

2003 Timeline

for Further Action

January	Concept distributed to all members of the Education Coalition, the Governor's Office, and the education committees of the Utah State Legislature requesting comment and input. (COMPLETED)
Mid-March	Ad Hoc Committee meets to refine proposal if necessary. (COMPLETED)
May 9	Ad Hoc Committee presents refined proposal to the Utah State Board of Education for approval to solicit public comment. (COMPLETED)
July 15ñ17	Governor's Competency Summit Concept Team meets to broaden proposal to a K-12 competency model. Submitted as recommendation to Ad Hoc Committee. (COMPLETED)
July 23	Ad Hoc Committee meets to consider K-12 competency model and takes recommendations under advisement. (COMPLETED)
August 1	Utah State Board of Education meets to accept K-12 competency model for Governor's Competency Summit discussion agenda. (COMPLETED)
Sept. ñ Oct.	Proposal drives discussion agenda of Governor's Competency Summit.
October	Ad Hoc Committee meets to consider input received through public comments and refine proposal as necessary.

Existing

Graduation Requirements to Be Replaced by the Proposal

During their four years of high school, students must pass the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test plus the following courses (with a grade of D- or better):

- ▶ 3 LANGUAGE ARTS
- ▶ 3 SOCIAL SCIENCE
- ▶ 2 MATHEMATICS
- ▶ 2 SCIENCE
- ▶ 1.5 ARTS
- ▶ 1.5 PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- ▶ 1 APPLIED TECHNOLOGY
- ▶ .5 COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY
- ▶ .5 HEALTH
- ▶ 9 ELECTIVE CLASSES OF THE STUDENT'S CHOOSING

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

WHEN WILL THIS TAKE EFFECT?

Key elementary standards will be identified in 2003-2004 and ready for implementation in fall 2004. Middle level students will begin to accrue required units of general education in fall 2004, beginning that year with the seventh grade. High school graduation requirements, including exit competencies, will take effect on the class of 2008---that is, students who will be in eighth grade in 2003-04. Graduation requirements won't be changed for students already registered in high school (9th through 12th grades).

I SAW THAT STUDENTS COULD DEMONSTRATE ABILITY FOR COURSE UNITS THROUGH REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

The USBE will develop requirements for granting units of general education in required areas where students have had outside instruction. This could mean, for example, that if a child has taken music lessons for years, part or all of the Fine Arts requirement could be met; or, if a child has been involved with competitive sports, part of all of the Physical Education requirement could be met. More information will be available on this as the requirements are developed.

HAS THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DECREASED ITS EMPHASIS ON FINE ARTS?

No. The State Board of Education believes that Fine Arts are vital to the well-rounded education of our youth. The requirements for Fine Arts units remain at the same level they have been for several years. Further, required elective units may be concentrated in the Fine Arts. Students should be able to take a variety of Fine Arts classes in middle and high school. However, it should be noted that, as a new requirement, one-third of those courses taken beyond the minimal 24 units must be taken from Language Arts (including Foreign Language), Math, Science, and Social Studies, as determined and defined by the local school district or charter school.

MOST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES REQUIRE STUDENTS TO HAVE PASSED ALGEBRA II IN HIGH SCHOOL. WHY IS THE STANDARD SET AT GEOMETRY OR APPLIED MATH II?

The Utah State Board of Education feels that Algebra II, which ventures into Trigonometry, is beyond the scope of what can reasonably be considered a basic education. Students who plan to attend a college or university should definitely pass Algebra II for admission, but for those not intending to further their

education in an academic setting, Geometry or Applied Math II is, the Board believes, a reasonable standard.

WHY ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ASKING FOR MORE MONEY TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN?

Competency for all students puts a greater resource burden on schools, as students of all abilities and challenges are expected to become proficient, not just to attend school. Students will no longer be able to pass on to the next grade level with a D average or sub-standard abilities. Schools will need to acquire tools for diagnostic assessment and have time for data collection and analysis. More remedial classes, during-the-day and after-school tutoring, and summer studies will be needed for students who can't demonstrate proficiency on standards. Students will need more counseling to choose their focused electives. Students planning to attend a college or university will also need additional counseling on meeting higher education enrollment standards.

WHAT'S IN THIS FOR THE TOP-PERFORMING STUDENT?

Students who can quickly demonstrate abilities and competencies can take more challenging courses, broaden their education, take advanced classes in the public schools, take college level classes before leaving high school, graduate early, serve an

internship with a business, or focus more time on elective courses. Academic boredom should end.

WHAT'S IN THIS FOR THE LOW-PERFORMING STUDENT?

Students who struggle with high standards and rigorous courses will be given the help they need to experience success. With frequent and ongoing diagnostic assessment of students, learning problems will be quickly diagnosed and treated immediately. Upon graduation, all diplomas will stand for a high level of skill and knowledge.

WHAT'S IN THIS FOR EMPLOYERS?

Utah high school graduates will have demonstrated, by competency and unit accrual, a higher level of performance in math, reading, writing, and reasoning, as well as other required courses and elective choices. Also, they will have a basic understanding of financial literacy and knowledge of America and its institutions.

WHAT'S IN THIS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION?

With increased rigor in course selection, and increased performance expectations in each course, students will be better prepared to meet college and university requirements for full, unconditional admission. Remedial college coursework will be curtailed, and able, articulate high school graduates will flood the system.

Please Respond
Let us know
what you think

Let us know
what you think
of this proposal.

Please mail to:

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